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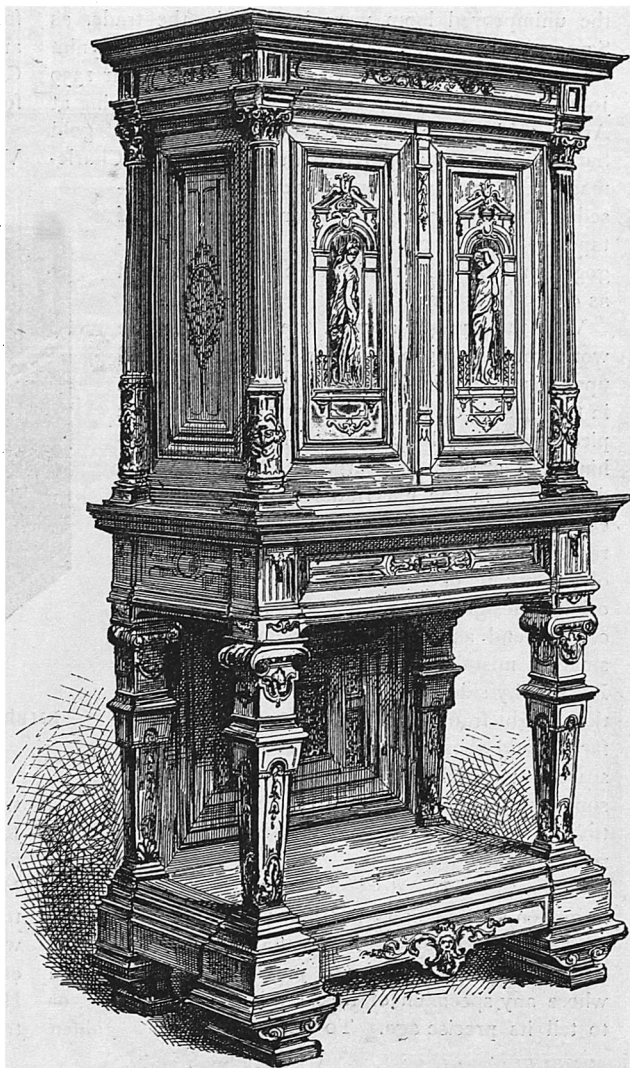
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## BIRD-SKINS AND FEATHERS FOR DECORATION.

WELL-PRESERVED home and foreign birdskins can be used to great advantage in a variety of ways, as sofa, settee, or chair backs, footstools, foot-warmers, mantelpiece borders, piano backs, screen panels, and rugs. For the first-mentioned purposes it is best to mount them on fine strong linen, the exact shape and size of the birdskin, or skins if several are combined. On this is tacked a piece of flannel, well powdered with camphor or any other preventive of moths, or a scent. The plumage should in all cases be put to stroke downward, and if not thick or fluffy enough to set out well and follow the curves of the furniture, be wadded to do so, fining off the wadding toward the edges, in which case the scent or powder can be put into the wadding. The next thing to do is to fasten the thus prepared plumage on a strip of cloth, velvet, satin, or brocade of the desired size, and some well-contrasting or harmonizing color, such as maroon, plum, mahogany, or black. The choice of these colors and textures must depend on those of the plumage mounted. Shades of gray look well on crimson, maroon, and plum, or a light but dull blue now much used again in artistic furniture. All shades of yellow and canary show best on russet browns, mahogany, deep plums, or black; peacock and other brilliant metallic blues and greens on black, mahogany, and dead French gray, or soft biscuit color. Cardinal and scarlet plumage mounts best on old gold, leather-brown, or cigar color. If the birdskins used are small, several of one kind should be put together so as to form a continued strip, or if enough of one kind are not forthcoming, they should be grouped so as to bring the most brilliant or decided colors into the middle of the strip or group. For settees, besides the centre strip for the back, a border for the seat can be applied with capital effect. Peacocks' feathers are admirably adapted for decorating seats of old-fashioned settees. One lately examined had the narrow-cushioned panels of the back covered in bright gold-colored brocade bordered thickly with peacock neck feathers and a narrow horizontal device of eye feathers in the centre of each panel. The seat had a border of the neck feathers. Two low stools and a couple of old-fashioned high-backed chairs were decorated to match, as well as the lid panel of a chest or casket destined to contain art treasures in needlework from many lands. The woodwork was all in dark carved oak. A table-cover of soft oak-brown cloth had a band of gold brocade with a waving line of eye feathers on it, and a shield device in one corner, on which a coat-of-arms was worked with the long gold fronds stripped from the tail feathers, something like the old-fashioned hair embroidery.

Footstools and foot-warmers, the latter mounted on a box frame, into which hot-water bottles, jars, or hot bricks are put, can be decorated with less costly birdskins; as of golden pheasant, guinea fowl, and other home and foreign birds. Any such should be provided with handles for carrying them about, as catching the plumage in lifting destroys the effect in a short time. For mantelpiece borders peacocks' feathers are particularly well adapted, laid on in thick fringes, running patterns, or clusters, on plush, cloth, satin, or velvet. Sometimes the fringe consists of the fronds stripped from the tail feathers mounted thickly on a tape, with an overlapping slanting row of eyes behind this, the same being repeated on the upper edge, and sometimes again where the shelf lies to the wall. This has a simple but very rich effect. The ground should be chosen to throw out all the shades of the eyes. French gray, pale peacock blue, old gold, citron, Indian red, salmon color, black and faded leaf and myrtle-green, are

among the most successful foundations. Plush is a favorite material for these decorations. Deep pendent fringes of many other feathers, either of one kind or judiciously mixed, look well headed with a band of shorter or neck feathers. The exquisite and various-hued parrot's and parrot's plumage—green, blue, cardinal, flesh-pink, and yellow—can be applied in tufts, in groups, or worked into regular designs with great success. Large scallops with rosettes composed of varicolored tufts of such feather gems, set in each, have a good effect. At a French convent school, where feather-



RENAISSANCE CREDENCE IN CARVED WOOD.

work has been carried to great perfection, a mantel valance and table border were recently worked in a deep floral pattern, entirely composed of bright-hued feathers, representing upward of twenty different flowers, the stems of the garland alone being traced with chenille. To complete the illusion, the tiniest humming-birds and bright tropical butterflies were hovering above the flowers. The foundation was satin cloth of the most delicate blue. At a German school of art this work was carried out in white, pale yellow, and light green feathers as garlands of white and yel-

low jasmine, on a deep myrtle-green foundation of plush.

Piano backs give a wide scope for peacocks' feather application. Choice tail feathers may be laid on in flat sheaves, crossed and tied with a handsome bow of very wide ribbon, and a border of eyes all round the edge of the back. Black plush or satin cloth make a handsome

foundation for this device. Groups of three interlaced rings of eye feathers, laid on flat, look well with a border of fronds round the edge of the back.

A large oval frame device formed of three eyes laid on fan-shaped, and with a monogram composed of very small eyes in the centre, is another way of using these feathers. A gigantic fan may be composed of many rows of graduated eyes, terminating with sticks which can be made either plain black or of carved Indian and Swiss wood or bone, the whole finished with a handsome ribbon bow, gold cord and tassel. The foundation color should be calculated to show the sticks well out. The fans should be placed sideways in a slanting position. One lately seen, composed of black glossy turkey neck feathers, with black sticks laid on Indian red satin sheeting, tied with a bow of black and gold brocade ribbon, looked unique and suitable for almost any style of furniture. Another in faded leaf color, was studded all over with brilliant butterflies, moths, fishing flies, and beetles composed of tropical birds' plumage, or real Indian jewel beetles. The thick fluffy feather border was composed of bright golden and blackcock and moorcock neck feathers.

Screen panels can be worked in the same style with great success. An old tapestry pattern (parrot and shepherdess under an oak tree) was lately reproduced in feather work for a drawing-room screen. The foundation was of two colors—azure-blue satin for the aerial part, and pale and dark green plush stripes for the turf background. The reproduction of the tree was particularly happy. Panels with single bird figures, worked if possible with their own plumage, look well. The body must be raised with wadding; the bills are best procured from a taxidermist, unless worked in chenille, which is also the best material for working the legs and claws. If the birdskins are not procurable, the feathers must be sewn on singly or in tufts on the wadded outline of the figure. Delicate wreaths, flung on a ground powdered over with small designs, are among the most happy productions of this artistic work.

Well-preserved breast-skins of all kinds of freshwater and sea fowl, applied as shaded stripes mounted on linen, and then joined firmly together, are made into beautiful rugs. The bright-colored necks are used as a border, and the whole is then mounted on cloth or other thick wool material or quilted silk. Grebes' and gulls' breasts mix well with the darker, more sombre colors, and the bright necks of domestic fowl brighten up such a border wonderfully; without taking away the delicate subdued tone of grays and browns peculiar to such plumage.

Single breast feathers mounted on narrow bands of linen or stout tape, and applied in frames one inside the other, either of one or several kinds, to the depth of twelve or fourteen inches, with the corners well defined, are good for such a rug. The centre panel can be filled out with one kind of skins or feathers—white or pale gray, or with bright-colored breasts. All single feathers of foreign, wild, or domestic fowl thus used must be well prepared for this purpose, and the quill parts, if stout, flattened before sewing on. Fur and feather bands can also be applied

alternately for such purposes, and the centre panels made of chamois-skins in gray or yellow, thickly worked in colored or brown purse silk, the feather bands or skins being applied only as a border. Cloth appliqué can be utilized with success on such chamois panels. Quilted satin centres look well surrounded with feathers or fur bands, especially seal or otter, or opossum, alternated with bands of undyed ostrich feathers and cock's neck feathers. Guinea-fowl feathers and those of the peahen make beautiful bands for such work; also the delicate gray of the common heron, and many kinds of ducks' feathers. Footstools can also be composed, bordered or decorated with this work.

INDIANA.



OVERDOOR DECORATION FOR A BOUDOIR.

low jasmine, on a deep myrtle-green foundation of plush.